

States, because that is what is at stake here. It is not the Iraqi people alone in this fight. We are fighting terrorists on their turf. We have not had an attack in the United States of America because we have been vigilant in keeping them on their turf, containing them on their turf, and building up our homeland security at the same time. We must keep the word and the commitment of the greatest Nation on Earth, and we must keep the trust of the people that we are going to keep the will to fight for freedom for their children and their children's children. That is what is at stake in this resolution.

I urge my colleagues to think of the consequences of cutting and running from a fight that is much bigger than the stabilization of Iraq. It is for the freedom and the way of life of Americans and our allies throughout the world.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, would you advise the managers as to the allocation of time still remaining under the control of each?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority has 1 hour 14 minutes; the minority has 1 hour 26 minutes.

Mr. WARNER. I thank the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Who yields time? The Senator from Michigan.

Mr. LEVIN. I yield 10 minutes to Senator SALAZAR.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Colorado is recognized.

Mr. SALAZAR. Mr. President, I am proud to be an original cosponsor of the Levin-Reed amendment on our Iraq policy.

The United States of America has already invested mightily in helping the Iraqi people. It is now time for the United States to make a clear and specific statement that the Iraqi people must assume the responsibility for finding Iraqi solutions to the challenges they face.

Indeed, that is exactly what the Iraqi government has said it wants. Just a few days ago, the new Iraqi National Security Advisor, Mowaffak al-Rubaie, stated that the Iraqi government anticipates some drawdown in U.S. troop numbers by the end of this year and continuing in 2007. He also said:

The removal of troops will also allow the Iraqi government to engage with some of our neighbors that have to date been at the very least sympathetic to the resistance because of what they call the "coalition occupation."

Finally, he made the statement:

The removal of foreign troops will legitimize Iraq's government in the eyes of its people.

The security adviser continued and essentially said that there would be a gradual transition from the American troop presence there in Iraq. So our amendment builds on what the Iraqi Government is telling us that they want.

America has invested life, blood, and treasure in Iraq over the past 3½ years.

Mr. President, 2,506 U.S. servicemen and women have been killed; Over 18,500 servicemen and women have been wounded; and some \$320 billion taxpayer dollars have been appropriated.

We all recognize that U.S. forces cannot and should not remain in Iraq indefinitely. Yesterday the House of Representatives voted overwhelmingly to retain language indicating that the U.S. will not construct permanent bases in Iraq precisely because they wanted to send a signal to Americans and to Iraqis—we don't plan on staying forever.

Last year the Senate joined together in calling for 2006 to be the year of transition in Iraq. That was a positive step, one that helped bring unity and cohesion to a debate too often marked by partisan rancor. Now we can take another constructive step together by supporting this well-thought-out amendment.

The Levin-Reed amendment affirms the statement that the Senate made last year: 2006 should be a year of transition in Iraq. It asks the President to present a flexible plan for that ongoing transition—one that can give some shape and direction to the oft-repeated mantra that "as the Iraqis stand up, we will stand down."

Let me just outline what this amendment does.

It states that an open-ended commitment in Iraq is unsustainable, and urges the following actions be undertaken to help the American people and the Iraqi people achieve success.

The Iraqis should take steps to promote more power sharing in Iraq, including through Constitutional changes, to avert civil conflict.

The President of the United States should convene an international summit on Iraq to increase burden-sharing in efforts to stabilize the country.

The government of Iraq should disarm militias and insist on integrity in the Iraqi armed forces and police.

The U.S. President should begin the transition of U.S. forces to a limited, three-fold mission. That mission would involve continued training of Iraqi forces, protecting U.S. assets and personnel, and targeted counter-terrorism activities, and by the end of 2006, the President should submit a plan to Congress for continuing the phased redeployment.

The U.S. should continue heavy diplomatic engagement in Iraq for the foreseeable future.

The President should assess the impact that our operations in Iraq are having on the overall US campaign against terrorism worldwide.

One thing that has become apparent in recent months is that many Americans are losing confidence in our Iraq policy—not in our servicemen and women, but in our policy. I know that history tells us that the U.S. is most successful in undertakings of this magnitude and difficulty when the American people are wholeheartedly behind the effort. It is my sincere hope that

this amendment, and the plan for phased redeployment appropriate to conditions on the ground that it calls for, will help contribute to success in Iraq by giving the American people new confidence that we are moving toward a clear destination, along a distinct path.

It is precisely because I recognize that stability in Iraq is important, and because I want this mission to succeed, that I am pleased to cosponsor this amendment. The only path to sustainable stability in Iraq requires Iraqis assuming responsibility for their own security and making the political accommodations necessary to avert civil war. The U.S. cannot do this for them. An open-ended policy in Iraq is not helping matters—it is letting extremist and divisive elements hide behind the cloak of nationalism, and it is providing a rationale for postponing tough choices which must be made by the Iraqi people.

And so those who would rather engage in mudslinging, those who would rather politicize this vital national security issue than deal with the reality that the only choices before us are tough choices, need to think again. We all in this Chamber, I believe, want success in Iraq. We need to work with the democratically-elected Iraqi government to get there. This amendment is in step with their vision.

I want to succeed in Iraq, and I also want our broader foreign policy goal to succeed—the goal of defeating the terrorist networks that wish to do us harm. It is precisely because I am concerned about the consequences for our national security of an open-ended commitment to keep large numbers of American troops deployed in Iraq that I support the Levin-Reed amendment. The fight against terrorism is a global endeavor, and for years Iraq has been sucking up most the resources, the troops, and the political will and capital in this room. This amendment calls on the administration to responsibly assess and adjust our policies so that we don't strain our military to the breaking point even as a global struggle rages on for years and perhaps decades to come.

The very fact that this amendment is likely to be criticized from both sides in the Iraq debate is, in my view, an endorsement of its language. This amendment rejects any call for an immediate withdrawal, because that would be irresponsible and would not serve our national interests. A failed Iraqi state would further destabilize an already volatile region, creating a lasting haven for terrorists. Our national security imperatives mandate our commitment to Iraq's success. There is no cutting, there is no running in this language. There is no deadline. There is no arbitrary timeframe.

But it also rejects the fingers-crossed, stay the meandering-course approach favored by those whose strategy seems to involve little more than hoping for the best. Optimism is a terrific attitude, but it's not a policy.